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AN

*R. Flexman*

ANSWER

TO *Britannicus*

BRITANICUS,

COMPILER of the

London-Journal.

By the COMPILER of

Cardinal WOLSEY's Life,

*Richard Piddes, D.D.*

Lately published.



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A N  
A N S W E R  
T O  
B R I T A N I C U S , &c.

S I R,



A D I known a more private Way of Conveyance to you, I might have satisfy'd my self with admonishing you privately, for the open Outrage, wherewith you have lately insulted me: But for want of particular Directions to your Office of Intelligence, I take this Method of doing myself Justice: A Method for which I can cite several Precedents; and some of them *yourself* will own to be authentick: not that I am under any Apprehensions of suffering in my Character, as

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a Writer,

a Writer, from any thing you have said ; but the regard I owe to the Principles, religious and moral, upon which I proceed in the Life of Cardinal *Wolsey*, will not suffer me to be silent, where I am so loudly and audaciously called upon to defend them : Confining myself therefore to the proper Subject of Inquiry, I shall not answer you in your own Method, but decline all Invectives that are meerly personal, as wholly foreign to the Purpose. Little Arts of Defamation may be proper to an *Hepdomadal* Retailer of Scandal, in order to captivate weak and ignorant Persons, and thereby occasion, what is principally intended, a brisker Circulation of his Papers ; but they are of no use towards answering that important Question, in the Search after Truth, *Where lyes the Force of the Argument ?*

Neither, indeed, are such defamatory Arts of any Significancy, towards rectifying the publick Judgment, in relation to the true *Character* of a Writer. Should any Man assert, what ought not to be admitted, that *Britannicus*, in his weekly *Lucubrations* is more entertaining or instructive than his Brother *Mist*, no Man would be obliged to acquiesce in such a Judgment, barely upon the Confidence and Assumption of him who might pretend to make it, especially, if he should appear in his manner of Writing to want those two essential Qualifications of a good Judge, *Candour* and *Capacity*.

*Capacity.* But whatever might become of the Competition between these two celebrated Journalists for Precedence, upon the List of Men eminent in their several Professions, the Truth of Facts, and the Reason of Things, would notwithstanding still subsist upon the same Foundation.

But, since after some few impotent Efforts towards prepossessing your Reader with disadvantageous Thoughts of me, you have endeavoured, (which I was very glad to find) to attack *the History of Cardinal Wolsey's Life*, in an argumentative Way, I take this Occasion of acquainting you, that every Thing you have offered, or shall offer, which has the Appearance of an Argument that may deserve to be considered, will, in due Time, if Providence permit, be fully and impartially considered: And I am so far from being in a Disposition to weaken the Force of any Proofs you may bring to confirm your Opinions, whether true or false, that I shall help you, for that I find may be done from what you have attempted already, to propose some of them, with more Force, and in a much better Light.

In the mean time, to obviate those ill Effects, which your bold, however crude Assertions, may have upon the vulgar Sort of People, *great* or *small*, for whom alone they seem calculated, it may not be improper to declare,



declare, that I do not think myself affected by any thing you have said, or can say to my Prejudice, in relation to your chimerical Charge of Popery. If by Popery you mean, what you can only mean by writing against *the Life of Cardinal Wolsey*, published by me, either the true primitive Doctrine of the Church of *England*, as contained in the Writings of her genuine Sons, and her publick Confessions, or else the true Principles of Christian Morality, by which, I have every where endeavoured to shew, in that *Life*, all the Counsels and Actions of Men, whether in a publick or private Capacity, are to be inviolably directed.

But if you intend, that every Man is a Papist, or popishly affected, who asserts any of the following Propositions; *That* God is the Author of Peace, and not of Confusion; *That* the Christian Church is a regular and visible Society, founded by the Son of God; *That* there is a continued Succession of Pastors in it, who derive their Powers from Christ, and which no human Authority can either confer, or alter the original Method of conveying; *That* such Pastors have certain inalienable, inherent, and therefore *independent* Rights, which the Civil Magistrate, as such, cannot exercise; and which the Civil Magistrate here in *England* has particularly disclaimed all Right of Exercising. If this is your Notion of Popery, the Wit of Man cannot contrive any Method  
in

in order to introduce Popery, so effectual, as by propagating this Notion: And therefore, whatever Professions of Zeal *Britanicus* has made against Popery, there is still strong Presumption to believe, what has been long much suspected, that he is really some Jesuit, or other Emissary of *Rome*, in Disguise.

What I have observed concerning the pernicious Tendency of those impious latitudinarian Principles, which have been of late Years so industriously disseminated, is grounded upon Facts too notoriously known. It has been observed, that since the Reformation was settled in *England*, there have never been in the same Compass of Time so many Conversions made to Popery, or so general a Disposition that Way, as from the Time, when *those* Principles were advanced; Principles, which lead to the Destruction of all Ecclesiastical Order and Government, not, as it might have been expected, by a Train of remote Consequences; but by their immediate, and direct Operation.

You, Sir, and your *Advisers* are the Men; therefore, however you may pretend to look another Way, who are really making Advances, *gross* Advances towards Popery; and not *they*, who defend the Protestant Religion by Principles, upon which the Church of *England* reformed, and all other Churches, *ought* to have reformed, from Popery.

Again,

Again, in respect to Morality, if you infer that every Man is a Papist, or ought to be reputed a Papist, *who* endeavours to obviate popular and unjust Calumnies, how general soever; *who* discovers in what he writes any Sentiments of Humanity or Good-nature; *who* thinks it an Act of historical Justice to represent both the Vices and Virtues of great Men, without Distinction of Parties, in a true Light, especially their Virtues: though I know it is more agreeable to a certain *Malignity* of Temper in some Men, to vilify and traduce all those, who are not in their own narrow Way of Thinking, whatever good Qualifications they may otherwise possess: Or, if to decry Corruption and Breach of Trust, Cruelty and Oppression, and all false Politicks, dishonourable to God, reproachful to human Nature, destructive to the State, and commonly in the Event, by some secret over-ruling Dispositions of Providence, to the Authors of them: In a Word, if to express a just Indignation against the abuse of Power in any Kind, or in any Station; if this, Sir, is your Notion of Popery, considered in relation to Moral Life, I will readily own, there is scarce a Page in *the Life of Cardinal Wolsey*, which does not afford clear and undeniable Evidence, whereby your Charge against me may be directly supported.

Before



Before I take Leave of you, I have a Request or two to make, for the Reasonableness of which, I appeal to the publick Judgment. It would be convenient, in the first Place, to prevent all Suspicion of base and insidious Usage, that I should know by whom I am attacked: If you are sent, as an invisible *Messenger of Satan* to buffet me, it is contrary to the Tenour of your Commission, to discover yourself, or your private Orders: But if you are, what you sometimes affect to be thought, a Man of Mettle, and a Gentleman; tho' nothing be more unmanly and dishonourable, than clandestinely and in Disguise to attack a Person, especially one so weak and defenceless, as I am represented; then I shall expect to know, with whom I am to engage; not only that I may be prepared to stand on my Defence, but that I may not be wanting in any decent Respect, even to an *Adversary*: For tho' I find we are on equal Terms, as to the contemptible Thoughts which each has of the other; yet, as I am uncertain, whether *Britannicus* may not be in some considerable Post of the Church or the State, however little or low his personal Character may be, I would not be guilty of the least Offence or Disregard to his *relative* Merit. To prevent any Error of that Kind, and at the same Time that

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you

you may avoid the Imputation of an abject Spirit, and as having some dishonest Designs, I desire you would skulk no longer under a borrowed Name, to the End you may, with more Security, and with less Apprehension of being called to Account, publish your virulent Reflections. You may remember who hath said, *Whoever doth evil hateth the Light, neither cometh to the Light, lest his Deeds should be reprov'd.* It is probable you may here endeavour to defend yourself, as well you can, by saying, you were only the Publisher, not the Writer of the Letter, to which I refer, and that you took it out of the Collection, or common Place, as it come to Hand, from which your *Journal of Saturday* last was to be furnished. This Excuse will not serve: Every Man knows, who knows any Thing, that he who propagates a Scandal, is, in common Construction, and the Reason of the Thing, to be treated as the Author of it: so that I am not in the least concerned to enquire, whether the Letter in your News-Paper was really communicated by a Friend, or whether, according to a common modern Practice, *Britanicus* wrote that Letter under another fictitious Name to himself; for nothing is more easy, than for a Man, how unjust or contradictory soever his Conduct may be, yet to give himself a good Name.

Another

Another Thing which I demand, and have a Right to demand, is, that you would fix clear and distinct Ideas to the Terms, of which you make use ; and not hide yourself in any popular, confused, or equivocal Language, which may leave the Mind in Darkness and Perplexity : When you charge an Author, for instance, with *Popery*, I would understand by such a Person, *one*, not who writes, or has always written with a becoming, tho' not perhaps with a furious, *Pharasaical* Zeal against Popery, but one who is really and in Fact promoting the Interests of Popery ; and, especially if he uses the very Methods, which the Papists themselves have directed, and do still employ, as there is great Reason to suspect, in most of our Dissenting Congregations. For you will not have the Effrontery to deny, against certain Facts, which are easily proved, that several Attempts have been made by Papists in Disguise, towards destroying the Constitution of the Church of *England*, the only Bulwark against Popery ; for were it once overthrown, the Papists would soon be in a Condition to despise all other Opposition.



Again, when you represent a Writer as an Enemy to the Reformation, and, in particular to *Martin Luther*, I would understand, not *one*, who has written in Defence of *Martin Luther*, and the only Man of your own Country, who had the Courage, as perhaps he had one of the finest Pens, to write in his Defence, in a Time of the greatest Danger; but by such a Writer I would understand, in direct Contradiction to your absurd Way (I have a Right here to call it so) of confounding the Names and Signification of Things, I would consider such a Man, had he given no other publick Evidences of his Zeal, respectively for them, as a true Friend to the Reformation; and, in particular, as a most generous and faithful Friend, to *Martin Luther*: And such a noble and seasonable Zeal for each of them, would be a much stronger Argument to me, and I believe to every Man, of that Writer's Sincerity, than all the verbal Protestations that any other Man *can* make against Popery: while by his wicked and schismatical Principles, he is making continual Attempts to divide the Church, that Popery may enter more easily at the Breach.

If we must therefore proceed in this Argument, let us go upon clear Grounds ; most of the Controversies which are agitated with so much Heat, and are drawn out into so great a Length, might be brought into a narrow Compass, if the true Signification of the Terms was once fixed, and so fixed, as to receive no Change from the Vicissitude of human Affairs. For Instance, when *Moderation* is once apply'd to signify a reasonable Indulgence towards those who dissent from us, or a Disposition to treat them with Humanity and Candour ; this Virtue, when they, who pleaded for it, are in another Situation, ought not, in my humble Opinion, to signify Cruelty and Oppression, or an implacable Spirit of Revenge.

The Reason is the same for avoiding all equivocal Terms and Expressions relating to the Conduct of *Civil* Life ; even the ordinary Language of Conversation is very confused ; the most common Terms, which every Man thinks he understands, are perhaps the most difficult to be explained. No one, when you mention Fire or Water, has the least Doubt about the Meaning of these Words ; but how few

few are there, who are able to give a just philosophical Definition of the Things they denote? It sufficiently answers the general End of Providence, that these Terms are so far understood, as to serve the common Uses of Life. Thus in respect to Terms relating to Morality; they are sufficiently intelligible towards carrying on the ordinary Commerce of Civil Life; but few People habituating themselves to reason only upon clear and determinate Ideas, they do not know how to apply them distinctly for their Direction in particular Cases: This is the Reason, there are so many Disputes, Errors, and Mistakes among Men, concerning Things, in the general Notion of which they seem to be unanimously agreed. Every Man, when the Question is proposed to him, whether he ought to follow the Dictates of Conscience, of Honour, and Honesty? will readily answer in the Affirmative; but, in the Application, how widely do *Conscience*, *Honour*, and *Honesty* differ? or rather, what irreconcilable contradictory Schemes are often pursued, severally, upon Pretence of them: This may sometimes proceed from Corruption and Design; but, in Respect to human Nature, we should rather suppose, it more commonly proceeds from want of some certain Standard, whereby the true Power of Words may be ascertained.

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I have insisted the longer upon this Demand, because it has been my particular Care, in the Work which you have under Examination, never to use any equivocal Expressions. I desire therefore, if I should be put to any future Trouble, in examining what you have to offer, that all Ambiguities of Speech may be avoided ; that in an Age, when People, who have in any Degree accustomed themselves to think regularly, will expect a Reason for every Thing, you would not imagine, that mere empty Sounds will pass for Arguments ; or that it will be of any Significancy, to cry out Popery, Popery, except you first determine, whether you mean by Popery a regular or an irregular Use of Ecclesiastical Power ; or whether you really do mean, by Popery, such ancient Apostolical Doctrines, as are not properly Popish Doctrines, with which, I shall never fear to be charged, by what Name or Names soever you may think proper to call them.

If you had not, without any previous Notice, begun open Acts of Hostility, I should have thought it more agreeable, if you are a Gentleman, to the Principles of Moral Honesty ; or if you are a Christian, but especially a Clergy-

a Clergyman, to the Rules of our holy Religion, that you had told me privately of my Faults : Means, in one Kind or other, might have been employed to *restore me, in the Spirit of Meekness* ; and if, upon a candid Representation to that End, I had not made some public Acknowledgement of any publick Offence, that might have been given by me, you would have had Cause to fall upon me, in the Manner you have done : But to fly out with so great Fury, to vilify and traduce me, without any Notice given, or the least Opportunity of explaining myself ; this, I conceive, is neither reconcileable with the Maxims of common *Probity*, or of *Christian Piety*. If I am too free in declaring myself, as to this Article, your Animadversions upon it, shall be considered with all the Regard, that may be due to them.

This is all I think necessary to say at present towards obviating the grand Article of your Accusation against me ; and the principal Design whereof is to destroy, so far as your able, the Reputation of my Book ; and of all other Books, which I have published, or *may* propose to publish : Tho' I have the Satisfaction to assure you, such of them as are already published, have been in General well received, and some of them by the best Judges ;  
and

and those Persons of the first Distinction, both in Church and State. I am sensible, how invidious it may be thought in a Writer to say any Thing to his own Advantage, under that Character; but there are certain Occasions, wherein the best Writers, and the greatest Criticks, have contended for such a Liberty. The Necessity which Men are put upon, in certain Cases, to defend their Reputation, will justify those little Deviations from the strict Rules of Modesty, which, at other Times, would be very indecent and offensive. And if a Dispensation, in this Case, is ever allowable, it is certainly so under Circumstances of Distress, from which the only Prospect a Man can have of being delivered, is by maintaining his Character, as a Writer. And as this Consideration will justify any proper Testimonies he may alledge, in his own Favour; So it plainly discovers the mean, sordid, and despicable Spirit of the Man, *Whoever he is*, that takes the Advantage of insulting any Writer under *such* unhappy Circumstances, and, perhaps, for *that* very Reason.

But I do not know, whether, after all, my Reputation, in a Capacity wherein I support, and have, for many Years, supported a large and numerous Family, is the only Thing of which you have endeavoured to deprive me.

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There is a vile Insinuation, which you seem much inclined to improve, as far as you are able, as if I had advanced some Things in Prejudice to the Royal Supremacy; against which, as I have not said any Thing, that can render me obnoxious, so I shall always be ready to assert it, in the Sense of our Articles, and other publick Tests; or so far as it is, in a human Way of conceiving Things, reasonable and intelligible; but, if a Man will contend for such an Ecclesiastical Supremacy in the State, as destroys the Notion and Being of a Church, he contends, in my ordinary Way of conceiving Things, for a Supremacy, that is altogether unreasonable and unintelligible. I know no *such* Supremacy; *neither the Churches of God.*

But, Sir, if, after all, I had really, in an argumentative Way, and in order to discover the Truth with more Certainty, proposed the Arguments for the Supremacy, and against it, with all the Force, of which they appeared to me capable; and that perhaps I would have done, had I been less a Stranger to the violent and cruel Spirit of those, whom *Britannicus* will call *moderate Men*, and the Fruits of whose Moderation I have largely experienced, for a Course of several Years; yet, even on this Supposition of my having stated the

the Case of the Supremacy at large, would *Britanicus* have answered the Arguments I brought from any common or borrowed Reason against the Supremacy, merely by referring me to an *Act of Parliament*? Is all the high and boasted Privilege of *Free-thinking* come at last to this Issue, that where Men will not submit *implicitly* to any Doctrine, established by the State, the Engines of Civil Power ought to be play'd upon them? And is *Britanicus* himself the Man, who would put those Engines in Motion? However Acts of Parliament may oblige to Peace or Submission, certainly it could never be the Intention of our Legislators, to render it criminal for us to inquire into the Reasonableness of them. It would be to little Purpose, that we have made a Secession from the pretended Seat of Infallibility at *Rome*, if we must submit blindly, or without Examination, to the Decisions of any human Authority whatever. Now all I have done, in relation to this nice Point of the Supremacy, is to mention it in general, without determining any Thing upon it, or even descending, as I had once designed, to specify the particular Arguments, on both Sides of the Question, relating to it. This is all I have done; but had I done more, I repeat again what has been already insinuated, *Britanicus* is the most unfit Person living, to

call in the secular Arm, or any fallible Authority to his Assistance.

And now, Sir, I readily acknowledge you have given the Writer of Cardinal *Wolsey's* Life an Opportunity of wiping off your Aspersions, which has not been ungrateful to him; for tho' he has nothing to fear from those equitable Readers, who will examine that Life without Prejudice, and are dispos'd to make Allowances for common Errors and Defects, many of which he is sensible, both from his own Inabilities, and the Nature of so great and difficult a Work must occur in it; yet he is at the same Time apprehensive, and particularly by occasion of a scandalous Paper, published on *Saturday* last, that all Persons are not in a Disposition to judge according to those Rules. And he has had frequent Opportunities of observing, there are great Numbers of Men, who scarce make any Judgment for themselves, either of Things or Persons, but judge only by *Direction* of other People.

Do but observe, Sir, when Hounds are casting about in the Fields, and any Scent happens to be touched upon, if *Babler* begins to open, what a Noise and a Yelping is there amongst the rest of the Pack? How mechanically do they



they answer? how strongly do they make a Report, and cry to one another, in their Language, *Heark to Babler*. Images, I own, of this Kind, do not appear perfectly suited to the Dignity of human Nature; but if Men, endow'd with free and reasonable Faculties, will make no Use of their *Freedom*; if they will debase human Nature so low, as mechanically to follow *Britanicus*, or any of his Advisers, without consulting Reason, or judging for themselves, I know no Way of reclaiming them from such a servile and abject Use of those noble Faculties, which God has given them, more proper, than by representing to them, that they are no longer to be considered, as acting, in that Respect, like Men, but only as mere Machines, stalking about in a human Shape.

The Influence of publick *Directors*, where any ill Designs are to be carry'd on, is so necessary towards regulating the Motions of those inferior Tools and Instruments, wherewith they are to work, that should *Britanicus* propose to propagate his pernicious Principles, under the Title of an Appeal to *common Sense*, all he would intend, or can be supposed to intend, is, that he appeals to the common Cry, or Voice of the Multitude; or to certain *Laws of Communication*, that are established

blished and now generally known, whereby the Noise may be sooner conveyed from one End of the Town, or perhaps from one Part of the Nation, to the other.

It is necessary then, how conscious soever a Writer is of the Innocency and Integrity of his Designs, that to prevent the ill Impressions of those, who are thought, or think themselves *leading Men*, upon the more weak and injudicious, especially upon your raw unexperienc'd young Fellows, when they first enter into any Fraternity; it is necessary, I say, to this End, that, in order to disabuse those, who are so mis-led, a Writer, who is thus attacked, should say something, so far as it may be said, with Truth and Decency, in Defence of himself, as well as of the Principles he had advanced. Not that I presume to have any Power or great Hopes of rectifying the Disorders here complained of; but it is particularly provoking to consider, that this abject Slavery of the Mind, this implicate Submission to the Dictates of blind fallible Men is no where more visible, than among those, who pretend to think, and act, with the greatest Freedom. This is so certain, that the very Word *Free-thinking* itself, when used by those, who affect to call themselves *Freethinkers*, has a Signification widely different, from what the Mind would

would naturally conceive it to import; for when we come to state the true Meaning of the Word, it does not signify to *prove all Things* by a due and impartial Examination, according to the Test of Reason; but only to think, in some *narrow particular* Way, contrary to the general Sense and *Reason* of Mankind; and *commonly*, for no other Reason.

My Design, Sir, in what is here observed, will be, in some Measure, answered, if either it tend to remind you of what was demanded before, that, so far as we have any Correspondence, you would avoid all Equivocation; and call Things and Persons by their right Names; or else, if it may be the Means of preventing any collusive Arts whatever, which you may use, in order to impose on your ignorant, and injudicious Readers.

This is all I think necessary to say at present, in answer to your Letter; how you will support your future Charge, or upon what Grounds, I do not know or enquire. I am in no Pain upon that Account; as knowing, tho' I am counted an Enemy by some Men for speaking the Truth, and only for speaking the Truth, yet, I bless God, there are still Men of Honour and Probity, of Humanity



manity and Learning in the World; who do not think that a sufficient Ground either of calumniating me, or discouraging my Endeavours, mean as they are, to do some little Good in the World, and in a Method, which under a very *afflicting Circumstance*, the Providence of God seems, more particularly, to direct.

And from such Persons, whatever involuntary Faults or Mistakes I may be charged with in the Life of Cardinal *Wolsey*, I hope they will appear to admit a favourable Construction. As to those, who judge by other Rules; or who have taken up any personal Prejudices against me; I know too well, what *manner of Spirit they are of* to expect their Favour; I only desire what I have a right to demand, common Justice from them.

And to convince you, Sir, that I am not affraid of submitting to the publick Judgment for any Thing, I have advanced, in the Cardinal's Life, I shall here furnish you with one Article; the very Article which some Persons have thought can most affect me, and upon which you may expatiate at your leisure. It is the Article of *Non-resistance*. In reference to which, I have the following Passage,

sage on occasion of the publick Justice, to which *Empson* and *Dudleigh* were brought, when *Henry* the Eighth succeeded to the Crown, for the many acts of Violence and Oppression, which they had committed, in the reign of his Father.

“ The lowest and most ignorant part of  
 “ Mankind have a natural Idea of Probity  
 “ and Justice ; and particularly, of the Ne-  
 “ cessity, which lies upon the civil Magi-  
 “ strate, of acting conformably to them, in  
 “ order to preserve the Peace and Happiness  
 “ of Society ; and to secure the Rights and  
 “ Liberties of private Persons. However  
 “ Men have differed in determining the  
 “ Measures of Obedience to the sovereign  
 “ Power, or in what Hands soever they have  
 “ thought that Power should be ultimately  
 “ lodged ; yet they have all agreed in de-  
 “ testing Tyranny and Oppression, as con-  
 “ trary to the primary End and Institution  
 “ of civil Government ; which is, confessedly,  
 “ on all sides for Protection and Security of  
 “ the Subject, not for *Destruction*. And there-  
 “ fore, if some have thought, that the per-  
 “ son of the supreme Magistrate is sacred  
 “ and inviolable ; and, upon no pretence of  
 “ Male-administration whatever, to be re-  
 “ sisted, it is not in favour of illegal and  
 E “ unjust

“ unjust Force, which they abhor, and con-  
 “ demn; but because order requires, there  
 “ should be a last resource of Power some-  
 “ where, and that Men should know distinct-  
 “ ly, and in some *regular* Method, where to  
 “ find it. But no such Method can be found  
 “ in popular and tumultuary Proceedings;  
 “ where the Frame of Government is un-  
 “ hinged; or, when every Man assumes the  
 “ Character of a Judge, and a Right, with-  
 “ out any legal Restraint, to do that, which  
 “ seems good in his own Eyes.

“ It is not then, as hath been sometimes  
 “ disingenuously insinuated, to support or  
 “ encourage a tyrannical Government, that  
 “ this Notion has been advanced; but to  
 “ prevent the barbarous and dreadful Effects  
 “ of *Tyranny*, when the sovereign Power de-  
 “ volves, or is pretended to devolve, on a  
 “ confused and disorderly Multitude: Since  
 “ there is a mixture of Imperfection in eve-  
 “ ry Government, arising from the present  
 “ imperfect State and Corruption of Man-  
 “ kind; that Model seems preferable, which,  
 “ all Things considered, offers the least vio-  
 “ lence to *Order*, and to the established  
 “ Laws, if, at certain Conjunctions, and in  
 “ the natural Course of Things, the Danger  
 “ of suffering by unjust and illegal Force,



“ is unavoidable, from the Prince on one  
 “ Part, or the People on the other ; it seems  
 “ more eligible, and for the greater Bene-  
 “ fit of Society, that a power of doing Mis-  
 “ chief should be lodged in one, than in ma-  
 “ ny Hands, the prospect of Redress, by the  
 “ Death of a single Tyrant, by a Change  
 “ of his Ministers, or his Measures, is much  
 “ more open, than where several distinct  
 “ Heads, especially, if they act in concert,  
 “ have established so many Dependencies, or  
 “ erected so many distinct Colonies, in sub-  
 “ serviency to the common Tyranny, through-  
 “ out all Parts of a Nation.

*Cardinal Wolsey's Life*, p. 25. 26.

These, Sir, are my Sentiments in relation  
 to a Subject, upon which several Volumes  
 have been written ; but I have endeavoured  
 to reduce the whole Controversy into a nar-  
 row Compass, by speaking, for so I appre-  
 hended it, to the *main Point*. I hope, I  
 have expressed myself in a manner suffici-  
 ent plain and intelligible, upon so nice a sub-  
 ject ; without offending against any Rules of  
 Decency, or treating those, who are of a dif-  
 ferent Opinion, with any Indignity or Disre-  
 spect, there is a Necessity, in my way of  

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arguing,

arguing, from the Nature and Reason of the thing, that there should be in all Governments, a last resource of Power somewhere; and that it ought to be distinctly known, where it is placed, and where, and how it ought to be applied. If there be a Power, in the People of calling the Sovereign, when he abuses his Trust, to account, or of resisting him; we ought to have some Rule, and under all legal Establishments, some legal Direction, for the Use and Exercise of this Power; The abuse of Power itself, we are told, as detestable as it is in the sight of God and Men, yet ought to be punished in a *regular* Way; and it is a strong Presumption, if there is no such Way of punishing a Tyrant, it was the intention of God to reserve him for the punishment of his own vindictive Justice. No Power, I conceive, can be of God, or agreeable to the Will of God, which cannot be *regularly* exercised. Yet, I am sensible, there are great Difficulties on both sides of the Question, concerning the Measures of civil Obedience, and that a Man of very moderate Capacity, may yet be able to say a great many plausible Things, or even to furnish out a large Volume, in defending the Doctrine of *Resistance*. Tho' it will not be deny'd, and you cannot but know, there are Difficulties on the other side, for which you will never  
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be able clearly to account. But, so long as both sides are agreed in heartily detesting Tyranny and Oppression, Cruelty and Persecution, and all Acts of Male-administration, that even appear to look that way, it is of no manner of consequence to the peace of the State, whether and how far *Britanicus*, and the Writer of *Cardinal Wolsey's* Life are divided, upon the Question.

It will be of much more Importance, to observe, that a *great Man*, in his admirable defence of *Dr. Sacheverell*, relating to this Article of Non-resistance, with a Beauty of Diction, a force of Argument, a just Arrangement of the Parts, and a happy Address to the Audience, which renders that Defence not inferior to the finest Essays either of the *Grecian* or the *Roman* Eloquence: This great Man, I say, has demonstrated, in a manner suited to the Capacities of all Men, that whatever Case or Cases might have formerly happened to justify Resistance, yet such Case or Cases, in a settled Government, ought not to be arbitrarily supposed. And that the Doctrine, in general, of *Non-resistance* is to be taught in the same Latitude, as if those Cases had never happened, and without regard to any of those Exceptions, upon which Resistance, when they did happen, was thought, at the time, lawful.

To



To discover still farther my Inclination to contribute, what I can, towards your Assistance, in examining the Life of Cardinal *Wolsey*, I shall here charge myself with a Fault, relating to it, which possibly might have escaped you. Upon the Faith of the printed Copies of that Life; by *Cavendish*, without collating them, in that Particular, as I ought to have done, with the Authentick Manuscripts, which I had the Opportunity of consulting, I have made use of the Expression, which seems to import, that the Cardinal *poisoned himself*; and from whence it has been the *vulgar* Opinion, that he *actually* poisoned himself. I have endeavoured to prove, indeed, from the Circumstances he was in, at the Time when he is supposed to have done it, that this Expression ought not to be taken in the most strict and literal Sense; but the true Answer to all captious and malevolent Readers of that Passage, is, that we do not find it in the written Manuscripts of the Cardinal's Life by *Cavendish*, which are of the best Authority; but it has been maliciously inserted in the printed Copies, by some Enemy; and from the same Motives, whereby *Britanicus* finds himself so continually stimulated to calumniate the Clergy, and to represent in the most odious Colours, every Action that has the least Reference

rence to their Order or Character. And here lies the main Ground of his Quarrel against me, for the Work, which he is taking to Pieces.

As to what I have notwithstanding asserted, in regard to the Succession and Powers of the Clergy, especially, of the *Episcopate*; or, in Opposition to any Doctrines destructive of their just Rights, particularly such Doctrines which tend to destroy all Order and Government in the Church. You may explain yourself, whenever you please, upon these Heads, I am ready to answer you; and, by the Blessing of God, tho' I am altogether unequal to the Subjects, which I think it my Duty to defend, yet I doubt not, but I shall be able sufficiently to defend myself, in so just a Cause, against you, and against all your *Advisers*.

But if, instead of arguing, you have Recourse to unmanly, little, scurrilous Arts of Detraction; and think it a sufficient Confutation of all I have said, or *may* say, to give yourself haughty Airs of Superiority, and Triumph; if you have no better Argument, as I am perswaded you have not, then to call me a *little* or a *low* Writer: or if, instead of reasoning and consulting the *Master*, who speaks (if you would hear him) continually within you, you are for going abroad in quest of any fallible *Authority*, or human Judicature; if you are

are for destroying the Kingdom of Christ; and for erecting a temporal Dominion over Conscience; or if all you mean by Liberty of Conscience should appear at last to be no other than a Liberty of defaming and destroying all those, who are not of your own Way; if, to conclude, instead of Reasoning, you should at last desire to have Recourse to your *Engines*; if this, should prove your Way of managing an Argument, I will still, by the Blessing of God, as not being conscious of the least Offence against any human Authority, defend myself, as well as I am able, yet with that decent Freedom and Assurance, that become a sincere Lover of Truth.

I shall add no more, but that being engaged in Affairs at present of more Consequence to me, than any Intercourse, I can propose to have with the Writer of the *London Journal*, I may not probably always answer the Challenges, which he may make in his weekly Papers, so soon as they are cry'd about the Streets: But he may be, in due Time, sensible, that I have not wholly neglected all proper Means of doing myself and him Justice.

Feb. 24,  
1725.

*I am, &c.*

LETTER





# LETTER II.



TO

## BRITANICUS.

S I R,

*Feb. 27, 1724-5.*



Y Answer to your former Letter was gone to the Press, before your Paper of this Day was put into my Hands; but I shall have very little Trouble in vindicating myself from the false and unjust Calumnies, where-with you proceed to charge me in it, with  
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regard to a Work, of which, after all the Defects that may be objected to it, I have had a much better Opinion, since your Animadversions upon it were made publick. The Letter at present before me, whether from yourself or your Friend, for I make no Distinction in the Case, carries its own Confutation along with it; and were it not that you may be supposed to have drawn it up by some private Instructions from me, I would have suffered it to pass, without making any Reflections upon it. But to avoid a Suspicion, which for any Thing I know, may already be got Abroad, *that* notwithstanding the Appearances of hostile Preparations, there is really a secret Treaty carrying on between us; and to shew, so far as my verbal Protestation can shew, that I neither have a Design to make Use of so mean an Artifice, nor apprehend, I have any Occasion for it: I shall here proceed directly, without the farther Ceremony of an Introduction, to confute the Reasons, such as they are, upon which you endeavour to support your last Articles of Accusation against me.

This, Sir, I shall do, by observing, that one great Defect of your Argumentation, to mention no other at present, doth visibly lye in your not distinguishing, where there was  
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a Necessity for making a Distinction; to the End, the Grounds of your Charge might have been more clearly understood.

1. You confound a Right of private Judgment, with a Power of reforming, or exercising Acts of publick Judicature: otherwise what you say cannot affect me; nor be of the least Consequence to overthrow any Principles, that I have advanced. I have always contended, and, by the Grace of God, always will contend, for that inalienable Right, which every Man has of judging for himself: but, this can give no private Person a Commission to disturb the Peace of the Society, whereof he is a Member. I am still of Opinion, that Men ought to proceed even in the Reformation of publick Abuses in a *regular* Way; and that the Church being a Society founded by Christ, till the Providence of God open some regular Method of reforming such Abuses, as may have crept into the Ecclesiastical Administration, it is not in the Power of any private Members whatever, arbitrarily, to introduce a Change in it.

Every Man may privately judge concerning the Reasonableness of those Laws, whereby the State, under the Protection of which



he lives, is governed ; but this does not give every Man, nor *any* Man Authority, even where unjust Laws are enacted, to alter or subvert the Constitution, or to attempt the Subversion of it, at Pleasure.

If the Christian Church is a Society founded on good Reasons of Wisdom, otherwise it cannot be founded by the Son of God, it must have the same Right of preserving Peace and Order, that all other Societies in the World, *as* such, are necessarily presumed to have. So that even when the Administration in it, is become very corrupt, yet every Man is not therefore privileged to be a Lawgiver, and a Judge. I question indeed, whether upon your own Principles, *any* Man, whither the Civil Magistrate himself, whatever Complements you make to him, in Opposition to the Church, yet can really be a Lawgiver and a Judge, in such a Case, and in any proper Sense, more than any private Subject. For in what, according to your Opinion, if I know any Thing of your Opinion, can his Right to reform, or to assist in reforming, be founded ? *Who art thou, that judgest another Man's Servant ?* or pretends to lay down any Rules, especially any *authoritative* Rules of judging to him ? *Why dost thou judge thy Brother ?* or why dost thou, being fallible and liable to Error,

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*set at nought thy Brother; or condemn him, in that which he alloweth.*

It would not be unpleasant to observe how *Britanicus* would attempt to reconcile the Power of reforming, *either* with the Right of the Ecclesiastical State, or of the Civil Magistrate. Upon his Principle, if that is really his Principle, which is violently suspected to be so, no Reformation could possibly have been made by one Authority, more than by the other. I might here, Sir, if I do not misrepresent your Principles, appeal to the Judgment of your own most partial Readers to determin, which of us is the best Friend to the Reformation; or upon more rational, and *intelligible* Grounds?

2. You do not distinguish between the Arguments, which I use as speaking in my own person, and those, which I recite, and am even acknowledged by you to recite, as speaking under a borrowed Person; you are so ingenious indeed, that in one of your Extracts you quote the following Words, *Say they, upon whose Principles I argue*; From whence any other Reader would have concluded, that I was not then arguing, nor would be thought to be arguing, upon my  
own

own Principles ; and yet (*O Rem ridiculam!*) you charge me with those Principles, and the proper Consequences from them, as if they were really, and properly my own. And your whole Charge in a manner, as to the present Article, is founded in this jesuitical Piece of Sophistry, particularly your Charge relating to the Example of our blessed Lord, in conforming to the *Jewish* Church : instead of denying the Fact, or confuting the Argument founded upon it, which might have been of some good use to your Readers, towards detecting the Fallacy of the Argument, which I only mentioned in an historical Way, *but* which it concerned you to obviate ; Instead of this, I say, you only run out into impertinent Declamation, and say nothing to the main Difficulty ; as if the Fact had not subsisted ; or no Argument had been formed from it, by those, whom I personated.

3. As to the Conjectures which I made, relating to the Motives upon which the Cardinal might conduct himself, with an Eye to a Reformation of Religion, I proposed them merely ; as Conjectures, without thinking myself obliged to defend them : and if on some Accounts they seem to bear a little hard on the Cardinal's Memory ; this only proves  
I was



I was unwilling to dissemble such Reflections, for that there appeared any probable Grounds, that might be interpreted to his Disadvantage. And, indeed, tho' he had some great and generous Qualities, I was far, when I wrote his Life, from designing a perfect Character. I charge him with several Faults, but was willing, considering some popular unjust Prejudices, under which he has all along suffered, to obviate them, so far as they might be obviated, upon just, and reasonable Grounds: And after all the Noise that has been made, concerning my *partiality* to him, I have not yet been charged, upon sufficient Evidence, with one false Fact, or with one false Inference from any true Fact, or Facts relating to him. And, I believe, it will be difficult for you to find many Instances of my failure in either Kind, tho' some, possibly, may be found in both Kinds.

However, had I really been under some favourable Prejudices in compiling the Life of so great a Prelate and Minister of State; who employed all his Ecclesiastical Revenues, not in a sacrilegious Application of them to private Uses, and all the Revenues arising from his civil Employments, not to aggrandise his own Family, *but* in acts of publick Minificence, especially towards the advancement

ment of Learning; which glorious Design both our Universities have so often and so justly celebrated; tho' in this respect I had not indeed written Cardinal *Wolsey's* Life, according to the strict Rules of historical Justice, yet an Error, which for the sake of so many beneficent Actions, had inclined me to *cover* even a *multitude* of Faults, would certainly have been more pardonable, than the Method, according to which, I perceive, his Life would have been written, under your Direction, with all *Bitterness and Wrath, and Anger and Clamour, and evil Speaking.*

Indeed the Life of Cardinal *Wolsey*, published by me, was not written under any Direction. Whatever Faults there may be in it, they are intirely my own. I communicated the two first Chapters in Manuscript, to some of my Friends, that I might learn something of their Judgment in general, concerning my stile and manner of Writing; but I do not remember that any Person ever saw two subsequent Pages of the Work 'till it was finished, and then indeed I had an opportunity of laying my Papers before a very worthy and learned Gentlemen, of the greatest and most extensive Knowledge in all the Parts of our civil History, but who will not be

will not be supposed to have given me any Directions relating to the Doctrines and Ecclesiastical Affairs, upon which you have been pleased to charge me.

It is but a mean and despicable Thing; after all, in regard to Principles, for a Man to write under any Direction. And tho' something may be said in excuse of a common *News-writer*, upon this Head, who is presumed to keep close to his Copy, and exactly to follow, what is *dictated* to him; yet he, who writes a History, not calculated to serve some present sinister Design, but for standing general Use, will consider better what is owing to Truth, and to the Dignity of his Subject.

4. In your last Charge, relating to Monasteries, you misrepresent the Plan, which I term *Pious and Charitable*, at most *Impious and Uncharitable*. I shall leave the Reader to judge concerning the Force of your Arguments, and what I have said in the Life of Cardinal *Wolsey*, upon that Subject; and only take the Liberty, of citing a single Passage from it, from which any indifferent Reader will infer, what my real Sentiments are, in  
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reference to Foundations of that kind, when under a due Regulation.

“ In his pious Foundations, *the Foundations*  
 “ of Cardinal Ximenes, there was one thing  
 “ that deserves to be more particularly con-  
 “ sidered, as having something singular in  
 “ the Design and Institution of it. He built  
 “ a Nunnery for the Education of Maids,  
 “ born of poor Parents, who after their re-  
 “ ceiving the Benefit of it, if they desired  
 “ to return into the World, and should be  
 “ disposed of in Marriage, had honoura-  
 “ ble Portions assigned to them for that  
 “ End.

“ Among the numerous beneficent Acts by  
 “ which the Piety of this Nation is distin-  
 “ guished, it is not easily accounted for, that  
 “ there should be no Societies, of that kind,  
 “ erected, for the Benefit of the other Sex ;  
 “ which, allowing to them the same Advan-  
 “ tages of Education as to Men, would cer-  
 “ tainly be equal to them, if not in the  
 “ Strength of their Minds, yet in the Beau-  
 “ ty and Delicacy of their Thoughts ; and  
 “ in several of the more liberal and polite  
 “ parts of Learning would make a readier  
 “ Progress, and probably arrive at length to  
 a greater

" a greater Perfection, than is common to  
 " Men. But if we consider a Society erect-  
 " ed to this End, not in regard to learned  
 " Improvements, but as a means of making  
 " a handsome Proportion for young Women  
 " without Fortune, especially such as are des-  
 " cended from good Families, or whose Qua-  
 " lity renders it less becoming for them to  
 " undertake any servile Employment; or  
 " who perhaps are of too tender a Com-  
 " position to endure Hardship or servile  
 " Work; what greater Instance of Huma-  
 " nity can any Person give? Or how be  
 " more capable of promoting the good of  
 " Society, than by projecting a Method,  
 " that those, who have been so unhappy  
 " as not to be born to the common Ad-  
 " vantages of it, may yet be rendered both  
 " useful and ornamental to it? Whether  
 " these Reasons in particular, determined  
 " the great *Ximenes* to erect a Society for the  
 " Benefit of young Maids, who had less Share  
 " of the Favours of Fortune, I do not pre-  
 " sume to say, but shall think my self hap-  
 " py, if by occasion of my mentioning  
 " so great and shining an Example; any  
 " Person or Persons, of competent Abilities,  
 " should be excited by the Excellency and  
 " Influence of it, *to go, and do likewise.*

Now, Sir, if it be a Contradiction, the greatest Contradiction to the Designs of Almighty God, and the good of human Society, to recommend Benefactions of this kind, I must readily own myself chargeable with contradicting the Designs of God and the Good of human Society, by a most evident and undeniable Proof of my own producing.

To conclude, in how disadvantageous a Light soever, I may appear, as a Writer, I should really blush to be charged with any of those weak and collusive Arguments, which you have pretended to bring against me; but I should be much more ashamed of such a Train of false precipitate Judgments, as I have here remarked in your last Paper. What I have said will be sufficient to satisfy all impartial Readers, that you have highly injured me; but if you have a mind to be Contentious, and I should understand that your Papers have any ill Effect upon your illiterate or less cautious Readers, which it may concern me to obviate, I shall take a proper Opportunity of disabusing them.

I am, Sir, &c.

POST-



## P O S T S C R I P T.

I Had almost forgot to acquaint you, that one Dr. *Knight* has done me the Honour to point to me, from the Pulpit, in a learned and eloquent Discourse, which you would do well to advertise ; yet since he has not mentioned me in the Body of his Work, or cited any particular Passage, upon which he grounds his Charge, but only refers (that is his *Device*) to the Life of *Cardinal* Wolsey in general, by a marginal Note, and that too, at the very End of his Performance ; I think it a pertinent and full Answer, to refer him in this Post-script, to what I have address'd above, more at large, to yourself ; for there ought to be a material Distinction observ'd, between a Man, who offends of *malicious Wickedness*, and him, who errs only in the Simplicity of his Heart.

F I N I S

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